

## Possible Rail Tie-Up Called Off By Unions

### Efforts Underway To Wind Up Entire Wage Dispute Quickly

## UNION HEADS CONFER

### Conferees AEW Close-Mouthed About Their Talks With Officials

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29.—(P)—The threat of a railroad strike dissolved today and there were indications in a series of union-government conferences that efforts are underway to wind up the whole wage dispute quickly and let the roads return to private management.

Leaders of the firemen, conductors and switchmen—the three unions which had not previously rescinded orders for a strike tomorrow—agreed to do so at a forenoon conference with War department officials.

### Several Developments

Then followed these developments: 1. The heads of these unions conferred at the White House with War Mobilization Director James F. Byrnes. (President Roosevelt, who has been handling the railroad case personally and had offered to arbitrate all wage disputes, was keeping to his room because of a head cold.)

2. The 15 non-operating unions, together with representatives of railroad management, conferred at the War Department with Lt. Gen. Brebron B. Somervell, appointed to operate the roads when the government seized them Monday night because of the strike threat.

3. Leaders of the firemen, conductors and switchmen went back to the War Department for a further conference with Somervell.

4. The trainmen and engineers, who agreed when the President first proposed arbitration, signed a contract with the railroads embodying his awards—4 cents an hour general wage increase and 5 cents in lieu of overtime and away-from-home expenses.

All the conferees were close-mouthed about their talks. The War Department disclosed that wage matters were involved, however, by saying in a statement that Somervell reiterated to the "non-op" group that the Army was concerned only with operating the railroads; that the matter of wages was up to other government agencies.

Late in the day, the firemen, conductors and switchmen had not formally recalled their strike orders although informed sources said there was no likelihood they would reverse the agreement to do so.

It was indicated the orders were held up in hopes that they could

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## STEEL WORKERS RETURN TO JOBS

### Reheating And Repair Of Furnaces Is Slowing Production

PITTSBURGH, Dec. 29.—(P)—While the CIO-United Steelworkers Union continued negotiations of renewal of contracts which expire shortly after the first of the year, the last of 170,000 workers who participated in stoppages in nine states were returning to their jobs tonight.

Reheating and repair of blast furnaces and other units taken out of production during the work tie-ups kept several thousands from their jobs after the main body of workers had gone back. Full production was expected in most plants by tomorrow or Friday.

All Republic Steel Corp. plants in Ohio, New York and Indiana were operating, but about 3,000 Republic employees at Cleveland awaited completion of repairs scheduled for tomorrow. Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. was operating at about 60 per cent, with the last 5,000 workers due to return by Friday.

A back-to-work vote taken at a general meeting of Wheeling Steel's 20,000 employees put that company's West Virginia and Ohio plants back on an operating basis. Two Pennsylvania plants of crucible Steel Co., and several Blaw-Knox Co. plants were among the larger Pittsburgh district Mills resuming full operations.

In Newport, Ky., full production was expected by tomorrow at the Andrews Steel Co. plant, only one of that state affected by the stoppage.

## Britons Are Appointed On The Invasion Team

### Ramsey Named Commander Of Naval Forces While Lehigh-Mallory Will Head The Air Forces—Hour For Attack Draws Nearer

LONDON, Dec. 29.—(P)—Two Britons filled with a spirit of audacity and attack were appointed today to stand at the side of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower as top officers of the grand army that will support the Allied invasion of western Europe: Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsey as commander-in-chief of the Allied navies and Air Marshal Trafford L. Lehigh-Mallory as commander-in-chief of Allied air forces.

These selections, announced at Prime Minister Churchill's official residence at No. 10 Downing Street, completed the team of the top command for the victory assault directly against Hitler's inner barricades, and they brought measurably nearer the fateful hour of attack for which preparations are proceeding at a markedly quickened pace.

American and British plans are being drawn closely together so that Gen. Eisenhower will step into an organization that in many senses is all ready to go now.

Both Admiral Ramsey, who is 60, and Marshall Leigh-Mallory, who is 51, are improvisers and

sive traditions of the British military forces. From the beginning of the war through the Allied operations in North Africa and Italy Admiral Ramsey, nicknamed "Dynamo" has fought his ships to the utmost and laid his plans with calculated daring.

It was he who brought the British home from the tragedy of Flankers and Dunkerque, somehow assembling a fleet of nondescript ships that took 335,000 exhausted British troops off beaches shaking under the fury of the German attack.

He also helped plan and command the greatest naval operations in history—those that landed the Allied armies in Tunisia and then carried forward through Sicily and Italy.

Marshal Leigh-Mallory is the sort of commander known in his profession as a "brains officer." He fought in the RAF during the Battle of Britain in command of some of those few to whom Churchill said so many owed so much. He had been the head of Britain's school of army cooperation and now heads the RAF fighter command.

## 3 LARGE GERMAN SHIPS ARE SUNK

### Destroyers Go Down In Battle In The Bay Of Biscay

LONDON, Dec. 29.—(P)—Allied war planes, including U. S. Navy Liberators, and British Royal Navy cruisers have sunk three Nazi destroyers and a speedy 5,000-ton Nazi blockade runner in a two-day sea and air battle in the Bay of Biscay this week.

An Admiralty communique tonight gave details of the engagements, which started Monday when a Sunderland flying-boat sighted the blockade runner about 500 miles west and northwest of Cape Finisterre, Spain.

Allied planes set her aflame and left her listing fatally and abandoned by her crew, about 70 men on rafts and rubber lifeboats dotted the sea.

At dawn yesterday a U. S. Liberator operating with the RAF coast command sighted a Nazi flotilla of 11 destroyers about 200 miles from the spot where the blockade runner had been sunk. The Liberator flashed the position of the flotilla to the British light cruisers Glasgow and Enterprise, which were steaming between the destroyers and their Nazi bases in southern France.

Flaming shellfire from the cruisers sank three of the destroyers and damaged several others in the battle, in which United States naval Liberators and RAF coastal command planes took part. It was announced.

The destruction of the destroyers capped the spectacular day-after-Christmas sinking of the 26,000-ton German battleship Scharnhorst off North Cape by other units of the Royal Navy.

The Allied forces came out of the Biscay battle, the Admiralty reported, with only a few casualties on the Glasgow and minor damage to the two cruisers. One coastal command Halifax and one Beaufighter were reported missing.

The Germans scattered in running from the Royal navy units but the cruisers concentrated on a group of four and sank the three in the running fight which lasted until dusk.

Planes spotted about 150 survivors from the sunken destroyers. The six-inch guns of the two cruisers outranged the guns of the destroyers.

The 9,100-ton Glasgow has main batteries of 12 six-inch guns while the smaller 7,580-ton Enterprise has seven 6-inch guns.

Aside from final selection of General Dwight D. Eisenhower for commander-in-chief, the most significant name on the roster of his newly chosen staff is that of

## BOWLES IS PROUD OF COURT RECORD

### He Says Price Office Has Won 94 Per Cent Of Its Cases

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29.—(P)—The Office of Price Administration cites its record in courts as the best answer to charges in Congress that it has operated without proper regard for the rights of citizens.

This record, the agency announced today, has been called to the attention of the Smith committee of the house in a 20,000-word statement replying to the committee's charges of usurpation and abuse of powers by OPA.

The committee, reporting Nov. 15, accused by OPA of issuing "illegal, absurd, useless and conflicting" regulations, construing its power so as to authorize it to "sentence citizens of the United States to starvation," and seeking through complicated procedure, to block legal redress.

In a letter to Representative Howard W. Smith, chairman of the House committee to investigate executive agencies, Price Administrator Chester Bowles wrote:

"The report (of the committee) deals largely with the past, but I believe it is important that misconceptions with respect to the past be cleared up and a common ground of understanding be established for the future."

The agency's reply states that of 4,991 OPA price, rent and rationing cases decided through last September, the government has won 94 per cent, with defendants prevailing in "only 291 cases."

The statement asserts that OPA derives authority from the second war powers act to suspend the allocation of rationed commodities to sellers who violate ration orders. Lacking such authority the report declares, "the administrator would be compelled to continue authorizing delivery of rationed scarce commodities to persons and companies that he knew to be black market operators."

Price control and rationing, the statement continues, are "closely related, inter-dependent means of coping with the same situation—scarcities in supply. If either form of control fails, the other cannot succeed."

Replying to committee criticisms of suspension order proceedings before OPA commissioners, the agency asserts such orders do not call for judicial proceedings but instead are administrative action.

his deputy, British Air Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder. The fact that an air officer was picked for that post—and the most seasoned British technician of air warfare at that—speaks volumes for the nature of the campaign.

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# RUSSIANS PRESS KIEV OFFENSIVE, CAPTURING RAIL HUB OF KOROSTEN; BERLIN ATTACKED BY RAF BOMBERS

## AMERICANS INSPECT JAP GUN ON NEW BRITAIN

### Claim Bombs Dropped In Residential Areas

## HEAVIEST OF THE WAR

### Communications Are Cut For Two Hours With Stockholm

LONDON, Thursday, Dec. 30.—(P)—Large RAF bombers attacked Berlin last night for the eighth time in a six-week period, it was announced today, and indicated from the Nazi capital and neutral Stockholm was that the raid was one of the heaviest of the war.

London officially announced the raid on Berlin shortly after the German radio had reported in a broadcast from the Nazi capital that large formations of the big black RAF night bombers had smashed the city with explosives and incendiaries.

A layer of clouds The obliteration campaign opened Nov. 18, when 2,500 long tons of explosives and fire bombs were dropped on Berlin and Ludwigshafen. The Berlin radio announced the new thrust.

"The sky was covered with a thick layer of clouds and British planes dropped explosives and incendiary bombs on thickly populated residential districts," the German station announced.

Telephonic communications between neutral Stockholm and Berlin were severed for almost two hours—from 7:50 p. m. to 9:30—and this indicated the duration of the alert.

Live In Ruins A dispatch from Stockholm said a Swedish correspondent in the German capital told his home office after telephone service was restored: "We now live in an immense ruin in which there is nothing more to bomb."

Five major raids were made up on Berlin by the RAF between Nov. 18 and Dec. 2 and hundreds of British bombers loosed explosives upon the Nazi nerve center again the night of Dec. 16. Explosives and fire were estimated then to have destroyed three-fifths of Berlin and left 2,000,000 homeless.

The campaign to wipe out Berlin as a Nazi war center was launched Nov. 18, when the greatest force of night bombers yet sent over Germany dropped 2,500 long tons of high explosives on the German capital and Ludwigshafen.

## ADMIRAL DOENITZ QUIT HIS POST

### Moscow Says Supreme Head Of German Navy Has Resigned

LONDON, Thursday, Dec. 30.—(P)—Admiral Karl Doenitz has resigned as supreme commander of the German navy as an aftermath of the loss of the 26,000-ton Nazi battleship Scharnhorst on a Barents Sea mission which he had ordered to boost his reputation, the Moscow radio said early today.

The Scharnhorst was sunk in an engagement with British home fleet units including the 35,000-ton Duke of York in an all-day sea battle Sunday off North Cape after she attempted to attack a Murmansk-bound convoy.

Admiral Doenitz, 52, developed German submarine tactics and became commander in chief of the Navy last January. Many of the technical improvements on the German submarines were credited to Doenitz.

Doenitz, only a commodore at the start of the war, rose rapidly and finally was elevated by Hitler over the heads of two admirals to the top command not quite a year ago. He supplanted Grand Admiral Erich Raeder.

Doenitz was primarily a submarine man. His elevation was said at the time to have been prompted by Hitler's demand for all-out U-boat warfare.



American troops examine a Japanese field gun which was captured when Sixth Army units landed on New Britain Island. (AP wirephoto from Signal Corps Radiotele.)

## New Britain Beachhead Being Held By Marines

ADVANCED ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, New Guinea, Thursday, Dec. 30.—(P)—An outnumbered American Marine force is holding its positions on the eastern flank of the Cape Gloucester, New Britain, invasion beachhead while other Marines on the western flank have overcome sharply stiffening Japanese resistance to advance half a mile in the direction of the vital airrome.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur's communique today reported that the Marines drove ahead under artillery and aerial support and used flame throwers to eliminate pillboxes and strong pockets of resistance about a mile from the airstrip.

The fighting reported in the communique took place Tuesday. The information came in brief reports from the field headquarters of Maj. Gen. William H. Rupertus, Marine Corps commander of the action on the northwestern tip of New Britain.

At least 200 Japanese were killed in a hot action on the banks of a river, Rupertus reported. The river was not named.

Attacks against the Marines' eastern line running inland from the shores of Borgen Bay, on the east flank of the invasion, were delivered by at least one regiment of Japanese, a headquarters spokesman said.

The enemy's growing opposition and increasing number of troops apparently involved indicated that the fight for possession of the airrome would be a bitter one. Forty fighters from Adm. William F. Halsey's South Pacific command dipped their wings over the enemy air and supply base at Rabaul, on the northeastern tip of New Britain, and invited the Japanese to come up and fight. The enemy sent up 60 planes, losing at least eight to American Corsairs and Hellcats.

One of our planes is missing. (A spokesman at Halsey's headquarters said pilots making late reports of the Rabaul fight which occurred Monday claimed they downed 17 of the enemy fighters.) American cruisers and destroyers steamed boldly into waters

## WEATHER

FORECAST NORTH CAROLINA: Fair and continued cold Thursday and Thursday night Friday partly cloudy and warmer. (By U. S. Weather Bureau) Meteorological data for the 24 hours ending 7:30 p. m., yesterday. Temperature: 1:30 am, 47, 7:30 am, 42, 1:30 pm, 33, 7:30 pm, 33. Maximum 49, Minimum 32, Mean 40, Normal 47. Humidity: 1:30 am, 100, 7:30 am, 95, 1:30 pm, 90, 7:30 pm, 98. Precipitation: Total for the 24 hours ending 7:30 pm, 0.48 inches. Total since the first of the month, 3.73 inches. Tides For Today (From the Tide Tables published by U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey): Wilmington High 7:04a Low 7:30p Masonboro Inlet 12:30p 7:45p 10:15a 3:51a 10:38p 4:35p Sunrise, 7:17 am, Sunset, 5:12 pm. Moonrise, 10:15 am, Moonset, 9:22 pm. Cape Fear River stage at Fayetteville, 14.68 feet. (Continued on Page Five; Col. 5)

## CANADIAN TROOPS CAPTURE ORTONA

### Roar Of Battle Lifts From Ruined Streets Of Italian Town

ALLIED HEADQUARTERS, Algiers, Dec. 29.—(P)—The roar of battle lifted from the ruined streets of Ortona today as Canadian troops who took the town in a savage eight-day battle, pushed on up the Adriatic coast to Italy toward the port of Pescara in the face of snow, sleet, piercing wind and stubborn Nazi resistance.

Ortona, once a neat town of 9,000, resembled a tomb. Every street was piled high with debris and the dead still lay in the streets and doorways, dispatches said. Those civilians who remained in the town through the bitter, bloody street fighting were too dazed to realize the Germans had gone.

While the victorious Canadians drove on toward Pescara, Indian troops of the Eighth Army wiped out pockets of resistance in Villa Grande, a hotly-contested village about three miles inland from Ortona. Farther inland, other Eighth Army units were reported within eight miles of the provincial capital of Chieti.

On the extreme opposite end of the Italian fighting line, British troops of Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark's Fifth Army fought fiercely to repel a full-scale German attack on the town of Punta Fiume at the mouth of the Garigliano river. The Nazis struck suddenly yesterday in clear, cold weather, evidently attempting to forestall an Allied assault in that area as the rain-flooded Garigliano began to subside. No decisive result yet was in sight.

Other vigorous fighting on the Fifth Army front occurred high in the mountains of central Italy, where French Moroccan infantry seized several peaks of Catenella Degli Mainardi, a 3,000-foot ridge controlling a road to Atina.

The Germans still held the village of San Vittore, six miles from Cassino, in full strength, and the American patrols saw every indication that the enemy intended to defend the village as desperately

ments at Gibraltar since the Italian invasion. The German account of the Commando raids on Sark followed an official Nazi announcement Sunday of a combined British and French raid Christmas Eve on an undisclosed point on the German-held French Channel coast.

Official British comment was lacking on the raids, but it can be assumed that lightning hit-and-run raids to test German "Atlantic Wall" defenses will increase as the invasion hour approaches.

The Sark assaults, DNB said, "failed like all similar attempts of this kind."

The Vichy radio reported that a British cruiser and nine torpedo boats have left Gibraltar and that

## 250 TOWNS TAKEN

### Reds Surge To Within 48 Miles Of The Old Polish Border

## GREAT POWER DRIVE

### Most Of The Bulge Around Kiev Has Now Been Recaptured

LONDON, Thursday, Dec. 30.—(P)—The Red Army has surged to within 48 miles of the prewar Polish border west of Kiev in a spectacular bread-through along a 110-mile arc, continuing today its offensive across flat steppe land that offered the Germans few natural defenses short of the Bug river, 200 miles away.

The Soviet power drive took 250 communities in 24 hours, including the major rail hub and fortress town of Korosten as powerful German defenses were suddenly shattered, Moscow announced.

Capture of the town of Ygvov, 12 miles beyond Korosten, and Ushomir, in between, on the railway line southwestward to Novograd Volinsk placed the Russians well beyond the Zhitomir-Korosten highwater mark of their earlier offensive toward Poland.

Additional details of the Moscow communique, recorded by the Soviet monitor, also put the swift-moving Red army 13 miles from the important rail junction of Berdichev as they captured Byelopol to the southeast in a significant 10-mile push from Nekhovisch, taken Tuesday. Byelopol is on the Berdichev-Kiev highway.

Advances in the past 24 hours gave the Russians complete control of a 35-mile sector of the trunk railway line from Leningrad to Odessa as they captured Chernakhov, 12 miles north of Zhitomir, Turchinka and Fassoovo, rail stations between Korosten and threatened Zhitomir.

Important Thrust In an important thrust southward at the lower end of this advancing Russian arc the second Ukrainian army captured Skvira, 50-miles southwest of Kiev, terminus of a short feeder railway into the Kiev-Zhmerinka line.

With today's gains, which included one of the war's highest one-day totals of recaptured hamlets, the Russians had recaptured in a week of irresistible offensive almost all of the big Kiev bulge which the Germans had painfully won in five weeks of bloody counter assault beginning in mid-November.

The Russians one more, as they had in late November, were threatening to smash through to the old Polish and Rumanian borders and perhaps even cut off the vast German forces in the Dnieper bend of the southern Ukraine.

Nazis Crumbling The powerful Nazi offense belt which the Germans hoped would hold the battle on Soviet soil appeared to be crumbling fast under the impact of this great display of Soviet offensive power, which was sparked by the official newspaper Red Star not to let the enemy reform his lines again on Russian territory.

Other outstanding developments of a victory-packed day for Russian arms, reported by the Mos-

## RETAIL STORES WILL STAY OPEN

### Merchants' Association Decides To Remain Open New Year's Day

The postoffice and banks of Wilmington will observe a holiday on New Year's Day, but retail stores will remain open Saturday, it was announced Wednesday.

John A. Sheehan, secretary of the Retail Merchants association, said merchants have voted to remain open January 1, because stores were closed last Saturday, for the benefit of county shoppers and military personnel at Camp Davis.

The postoffice will generally observe the holiday and no rural deliveries of mail will be made. City delivery service will be furnished, and from 10 a. m. to 12 o'clock the general delivery, registry, C. O. D. and parcel post windows will be open.